



# United States Department of the Interior

## KENAI NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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NEWS RELEASE

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### **Stiff Sentences Result From 2005 Moose Poaching Case on the KNWR**

The Kenai District Court for the State of Alaska recently accepted plea agreements from three defendants in a 2005 case of multiple illegal moose takings in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. A 2006 information memo filed by the State Attorney General's Office of Special Prosecution charged Feoktist (Frank) A. Martushev, of Homer, with two counts of possessing/transporting illegally taken game. A juvenile member of Martushev's hunting party was charged with taking two moose in closed season; possessing/transporting illegally taken game; and falsifying a permit report. Eoicifi Reutov, of Gervais, Oregon was charged with taking a moose in closed season and possessing/transporting illegally taken game.

Officers from the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge conducted a lengthy investigation of the Martushev hunting party's activities after receiving a tip from hunters who had witnessed one of the illegal moose takings. The incidents took place in the DM535 trophy moose drawing permit area in the vicinity of Timberline Lake. Evidence uncovered during the investigation indicated the juvenile member of the party killed two moose outside his assigned hunting area, cooperated with Martushev to illegally transport a moose, and later

falsified his harvest permit report stating the moose was shot in DM533 rather than DM535.

Another member of the hunting party, Eoicifi Reutov, a DM533 permit holder, also killed a trophy moose outside his assigned DM533 hunting area. Subsequently, Reutov and Frank Martushev transported the illegally taken moose using Martushev's horses.

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Officers intercepted the Martushevs when the hunting party arrived after dark at the Tustumena Boat Launch, and there seized the illegally taken animals and firearms. Later, officers flew to the site of the Martushev camp on the Tustumena Bench, seized firearms, and obtained additional incriminating evidence.

In a separate matter discovered during the investigation, the investigator determined Frank Martushev received payment for illegally providing big game transport services to a non-resident hunter from Arizona who had drawn a trophy moose permit in the adjacent DM539 area. Martushev accepted payment to bring his pack horses miles into the KNWR wilderness to outfit the non-resident's hunting party. Martushev did not possess a State of Alaska guide license or a KNWR commercial use permit authorizing the activity.

Frank Martushev entered a no contest plea to two counts of knowingly providing transport services to big game hunters without a license. For the two state counts, Martushev received fines totaling \$10,000 with \$7,500 suspended, 360 days in jail, with 360 days suspended. Martushev also paid \$1000 bail on a federal charge of conducting a commercial enterprise on the national wildlife refuge without a permit. The conditions of Martushev's three-year state probation include that he be convicted of no jailable offenses during the probationary period, the loss of state hunting privileges for 1 year, and banishment from hunting or accompanying other hunters on the Kenai National Wildlife

Refuge for three years. Additionally, Martushev will make a \$4000 donation to the Friends of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge to be used to promote future wildlife conservation efforts.

The juvenile offender entered a plea of no contest to taking a moose in closed season and falsifying a permit report. For his actions he received fines totaling \$3500, with \$3000 suspended, 210 days in jail with 210 days suspended. The juvenile will serve three years state probation, loss of state hunting privileges for one year, loss of the firearm and moose, and banishment from hunting or accompanying other hunters on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge for three years. In addition, he was ordered to perform 160 hours of community work service and pay \$1000 restitution to the State of Alaska for the illegally taken moose.

Non-resident hunter Eoicifi Reutov, entered a plea of no contest to taking a moose in closed season and possessing/transporting an illegally taken moose. For his actions, Reutov received fines totaling \$5000 with \$3000 suspended, and 240 days in jail with 240 suspended. Reutov was also ordered to five years' state probation, loss of state hunting privileges for one year (during which time he may not accompany other hunters in the field), and banishment from the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge for five years. Additionally, Reutov surrendered his interest in the moose and the firearms used in commission of the offense. Finally, Reutov was ordered to make restitution in the amount of \$1000 to the State of Alaska for the illegally taken moose.

Refuge Manager Robin West said, "This is a great example of ethical hunters standing up for what is right. Without their willingness to be good observers, and most importantly, to step forward and get involved, we would not have made this case. I am

pleased with the outcome and hope it sends a strong message that actions of this sort will be dealt with harshly." Manager West also expressed his appreciation for the cooperation of the State Attorney General's Office of Special Prosecution and the investigating officers for the time and efforts expended on bringing the perpetrators to justice.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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